DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 361 822 CS 508 335

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TITLE Listening for Listeners: Two Educational Radio Stations Discover Audience Research.
PUB DATE Aug 93
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (76th, Kansas City, MO, August 11-14, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Historical Materials (060) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Audience Analysis; Audience Response; *Educational Radio; Higher Education; Mass Media Use; Media Research; Programing (Broadcast); Research Methodology
IDENTIFIERS Ohio State University; *Public Radio; University of Wisconsin Madison

ABSTRACT

Two pioneering public radio stations--WOSU-AM, licensed to the Ohio State University in Columbus, and WHA-AM, licensed to the University of Wisconsin in Madison--conducted audience research as early as the 1920s. The challenge for early education broadcasters became to adapt the existing audience research paradigm to their purposes, or to develop a new, more appropriate model. The earliest attempts (in 1923) at audience research by these stations was to determine whether communication by radio had indeed taken place. Both stations also analyzed mail received from listeners to gauge reaction to programming decisions. Research during the 1930s was promoted by the close relationship between WOSU and Ohio State's Bureau of Educational Research. The Institute for Educational Radio, an annual conference held at Ohio State between 1930 and 1953, created a forum for educators and broadcasters to discuss issues of educational broadcasting. Audience studies declined during the years of World War II. In 1946, Harrison B. Summers brought an interest in commercial broadcasting and audience research methods to Ohio State. He conducted numerous research studies during his 18 years on the Ohio State faculty, providing WOSU with a wealth of audience data. By the 1950s, interest in audience research was slowly spreading throughout educational broadcasting. Using research to justify institutional support remained important after passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. Issues raised by audience research reflect the still unresolved mission-versus-market debate in public broadcasting. (Eighty-two notes are included.) (RS)

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Listening For Listeners: Two Educational Radio Stations Discover Audience Research

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A paper submitted for presentation to AEJMC's Media Management and Economics Division, Kansas City, August 1993.

CS508335

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Listening For Listeners: Two Educational Radio Stations Discover Audience Research

The 1980s have been described as the decade of the "research revolution" in U.S. public radio.[1] After the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) began funding audience research projects in public broadcasting during the 1970s, many public radio managers initially resisted research as representing commercialism, that "watching the ratings" somehow compromised their public service mission. But the industry's leaders gradually came to embrace audience research as a valued tool for making decisions about programming and fundraising.[2] The major public radio network, National Public Radio (NPR), maintains an audience research unit, as does CPB, and many individual public radio stations employ staffers responsible for conducting and analyzing research data. In addition, several independent consulting firms have emerged to provide audience research services to stations.

This increased emphasis upon audience analysis has been noted by some critics as evidence of a fundamental change in the nature of public radio, away from its educational, service-driven origins toward a "quasi-commercial," audience-driven orientation in which public stations target segments of the potential audience -- those most likely to support the stations financially.[3] The ascendance of audience research typifies for these critics the primacy of market considerations over the social and cultural imperatives that traditionally distinguished public from commercial broadcasting.[4]

Implicit in the critics' arguments is the assumption that educational broadcasters[5] based their programming decisions on an intuitive -- somewhat paternalistic -- sense of public service and what their listeners *needed*. This followed the lead of the British Broadcasting Corporation's first general manager,

John C.W. Reith (later Lord Reith), who set himself up as arbiter of what the British people should hear and who once wrote that he believed he was called by God to direct the BBC.[6] In this mode program policies were shaped without much knowledge of -- or concern for -- the wishes and interests of the audience.[7] From this assumption flows the notion that public radio's interest in researching its audience is largely a phenomenon of the last 15 years, that contemporary public broadcasters "discovered" audience research. To be sure, this assumption aptly described many educational broadcasters. However, it is not correct to assume that audience research in public radio[8] began with the contemporary "research revolution."

This study of two pioneering public radio stations -- WOSU-AM, licensed to the Ohio State University in Columbus, and WHA-AM, licensed to the University of Wisconsin in Madison -- found that station managers conducted audience research of various kinds as early as the 1920s. Such research continued, on a sporadic basis, through the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967[9], which established CPB.[10] Thus it should be said that public radio's contemporary audience research agenda represents an *evolution*, not a *revolution*. Further, the conduct of audience research throughout the history of public radio indicates that the market-versus-mission dialectic is not new. At least to some extent, educational broadcasters wrestled with reconciling their social and cultural responsibilities with accountability to their audience, just as do contemporary public broadcasters.

Influence of WOSU and WHA

This paper will describe the conduct of audience research at WOSU and WHA from their origins in the 1920s through the early 1950s. At that time educational television stations were established at Ohio State and Wisconsin, and the research focus shifted to the newer medium.[11] It should be noted that

educational broadcasters and academics also conducted research dealing with the effectiveness of radio, and later television, in teaching. However, research motivated by pedagogical concerns is not the focus of this study; this paper is concerned with research about audiences: their size, composition, preferences and behaviors.

WOSU and WHA were selected for analysis based on several reasons. First, they were among the first educational radio stations in the nation. Indeed WHA, which began regularly scheduled broadcasts in 1919, claims to be the oldest radio station in the United States[12]; WOSU began broadcasting in 1922. In addition, WHA and WOSU were widely recognized as influential within the educational radio community. While some degree of influence was conferred by longevity, the stations' leadership was also manifest in other ways. WOSU's significance derived from Ohio State's sponsorship of the Institute for Education by Radio (to be discussed below) and from the leadership roles played by station officials and university faculty in educational broadcasting's national organizations, notably the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB), of which station manager Richard B. Hull served as president. As for WHA's influence, the station's "Wisconsin School of the Air" became a national model; early station manager Harold B. McCarty served as NAEB president and testified before Congress on educational broadcasting issues; and the Wisconsin State Broadcasting Service that evolved from WHA became the first statewide educational radio network in the United States.[13]

WOSU and WHA were therefore seen as "model" educational stations, viewed favorably and perhaps emulated by their peer educational broadcasters. It is assumed here that the audience research intiatives of the selected stations attracted the attention of some of their colleagues and legitimized to some extent the use of such research. The diffusion of such research will be discussed below.

Finally, another criterion for inclusion in this study was the fact that the Ohio State University and the University of Wisconsin, as licensees of WOSU and WHA, maintained comprehensive archives for their respective stations, which provided the author an opportunity to examine historical data related to audience research .[14]

Contrasting Perspectives on Audience Research

While audience research in public broadcasting has not received much scholarly attention, the history and use of such research in commercial broadcast media has been well documented.[15] Once advertising revenue became the economic basis of commercial radio in the 1920s,[16] audience research quickly became fundamental. Advertisers, who were in effect buying audiences from broadcasters, were interested in measuring what they were getting for their money. Absent data analogous to circulation figures available for print media, radio advertisers had to take their unseen audience largely on faith. As Beville noted, "Claims by networks and stations varied widely, and documentation was flimsy or non-existent."[17] However, the new medium was alluring to advertisers: the establishment of national networks indicated radio's potential as a national sales vehicle and the impact of programs such as "Amos 'n' Andy" demonstrated its grip on the public's attention.[18] Accordingly, the Association of National Advertisers in 1930 initiated a series of telephone surveys, the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting (CAB), conducted by market researcher Archibald M. Crossley, in an attempt to measure radio audiences. Competing researchers emerged -- first C.E. Hooper, of "Hooperatings" fame, and eventually A.C. Nielsen and the American Research Bureau (later known as Arbitron), to name some of the notables in this field.

Over time the methodologies employed by researchers changed, as did the technology, with the development of mechanical meters that measured radio and

television usage.[19] The general evolution of audience research is beyond the scope of this paper.[20] Nonetheless, despite the increasing sophistication of the ratings industry, its function remained constant: to provide the institutional knowledge used by advertisers and broadcasters to buy and sell audiences.

What uses, then, were educational broadcasters to make of audience research? They did not sell advertising, and the selling of underwriting to businesses did not become widespread until the 1970s. In the founding ideology of public broadcasting the audience was characterized not as a *market of consumers*, to be captured for profit, but rather as a *public of citizens*, to be "served." As such the public broadcaster 's mission was to educate, inform and uplift the audience. In what ways could audience ratings provide the institutional knowledge to inform and advance this mission? Ratings measure attention to programs; the public broadcaster seeks more meaningful communication than simply attention. The challenge for early educational broadcasters became, therefore, to adapt the existing audience research paradigm to their purposes, or to develop a new, more appropriate model. The cases of WOSU and WHA reflect how two leading stations confronted this conundrum.

Early Attempts at Audience Research in Educational Broadcasting

The nascent technology of radio was still unproven when WHA and WOSU[21] began broadcasting. Accordingly, the stations' earliest attempts at audience research involved determining whether communication by radio had indeed taken place. In 1923 WHA compiled and published a map of Wisconsin and surrounding states indicating locations from which more than 800 acknowledgements had been received from listeners to University of Wisconsin basketball game broadcasts during February and March 1923.[22] WOSU similarly tracked reception of its signal in 1923, with engineer R.C. Higgy noting mail from listeners in more than 30 states.[23] In addition, WHA's first program director,

William Lighty, wanted to know more about the station's *potential* audience and initiated an early research survey in 1924. He sent questionnaires to students in the University of Wisconsin's radio classes, asking about the number of radio sets in the students' home communities.[24] No evidence of the results of the survey was available in the archives.

WOSU's managers expressed concern for the program interests of their listeners throughout the 1920s. WOSU officials sought, in an unspecified way, to analyze mail from listeners beginning in 1923 "in an effort to determine the nature of their desires."[25] In 1927 station officials noted the mail response indicated the popularity of lectures, and listener interest in string or salon orchestra music over jazz. However, they cautioned that "it is on long-time observations that program policy must be built" and no apparent change in programming was evident in the station's program schedule.[26] Interestingly, this reflects an early sensitivity to issues of ratings-driven decision making, such as when television network executives cancel new programs with low ratings before the shows have an opportunity to develop an audience.

The Ohio State station made a further attempt to gauge the listening preferences of its audience in 1930. In its program guide WOSU included a solicitation of listeners to become "regular reporters."[27] This entailed asking listeners to record their impressions of certain programs "to determine more accurately the usefulness of the services now being broadcast, as well as to determine what the people prefer to hear."[28] Listeners who wished to become "regular reporters" were invited to write down and send the station their reactions to a given program, whether the subject was interesting, and whether the lecturer's presentation was good. The station expressed interest in developing a large group of listeners willing to report regularly on WOSU programs.

However, no further mention of this research initiative, a precursor of the focus group approach, was available in the Ohio State archives.

In Wisconsin the managers of WHA were developing an interest in the reaction of their listeners to their programming. This concern was evident in the minutes of a 1932 meeting among Program Director Harold B. McCarty, his assistant Harold A. Engel, and Prof. Andrew W. Hopkins of the University Radio Committee, a faculty oversight body.[29] The three decided to send questionnaires to "regular listeners" of WHA's homemakers, farm and school programs, as derived from lists of people who had written to acknowledge reception of the programs, seeking their impressions of the programs. In addition, they decided to make spot announcements on the air asking certain questions of listeners from specific counties. Questions were to include: "Do you prefer advertising-free radio programs?" and "What do you like best about WHA broadcasts?" No further information regarding these questionnaires or announcements was available in the archives.

The meeting spawned a renewed interest in audience research at WHA and a Radio Research Committee was formed.[30] Mail was analyzed to indicate its county of origin for the same 12-day periods in December of 1933 and 1934.[31] Another mail analysis examined the number of letters in response to individual programs.[32] Wisconsin school teachers were surveyed to determine the number of student listeners to "Wisconsin School of the Air" educational broadcasts;[33] student enrollment surveys became a staple of WHA's audience research. In addition, the University of Wisconsin Extension conducted a statewide survey of the radio reception and listening interests of 1,760 Wisconsinites. Two-thirds of Dane County (which includes Madison) residents surveyed reported being "interested in WHA."[34]

Impact of the Bureau of Educational Research

Audience research in educational broadcasting during the 1930s was promoted by the close relationship between WOSU and Ohio State's Bureau of Educational Research. The bureau's director, W.W. Charters, had a strong interest in WOSU and its educational possibilities.[35] Supported by a Payne Fund grant, Charters established the Institute for Education by Radio (IER) in 1930. The IER was an annual conference, held at Ohio State between 1930 and 1953, that created a forum for educators and broadcasters to discuss issues of educational broadcasting. Conference proceedings were published annually. The IER provided educational broadcasters a forum for sharing research findings -- about audiences and pedagogy -- as well as programming ideas, and active stations such as WOSU and WHA regularly reported on their research initiatives.

Charters created a Radio Division within the Bureau of Educational Research, which further energized audience research at Ohio State. One of the graduate students working in the division was Frank Stanton, who would become president of CBS. Stanton's doctoral focus was upon the way radio networks measured audience size; for his dissertation he designed a device to plug into radio sets to record listening behavior -- an antecedent of the Nielsen audimeter that would become the central instrument of audience measurement for decades to come.[36] The division's long-time director was Prof. I. Keith Tyler. Because WOSU, like many other educational radio stations, grew out of engineering experiments at universities, early station managers were often engineers or scientists. Tyler believed these managers, because they lacked pedagogical backgrounds, needed the benefits of research in producing effective educational broadcasts.[37] Ohio State reached out to help other stations by offering a guide to how college and university broadcasters could use students to conduct listener surveys.[38]

Examples of Ohio State research from the 1930s included a March 1931 survey in which questionnaires were mailed out. The survey measured reception, the number of WOSU listeners, and the relative popularity of programs.[39] The following year Ohio State's College of Agriculture measured listenership to WOSU's "Farm Night" program by including questions on registration forms for an agricultural exhibition. Registrants were asked whether they could receive WOSU's signal and whether they listened to "Farm Night."[40] The report of the "Farm Night" survey findings presented Ohio State's radio research agenda. The authors expressed interest in conducting a series of annual surveys of program popularity, audience size, and the effectiveness of various educational methods.[41]

With the onset of World War II the stations concentrated on producing war-related programming, and the number of audience studies declined.[42] Through the 1940s WHA's audience research efforts involved surveys of "Wisconsin School of the Air" enrollments and occasional mail analyses, which showed the number of cities and counties (as well as adjacent states) generating mail. [43] WOSU's audience research also consisted largely of mail analysis during the war years.

Commercial-Style Research Comes to Educational Radio

However, in 1946, the Ohio State station's research capability again received a boost from a faculty member. Harrison B. Summers left a position with NBC to join the Department of Speech, bringing with him an interest in commercial broadcasting and audience research methods.[44] Summers was visionary in calling for research beyond mere "nose-counting" -- the number of listeners -- into such areas as listener demographics, wishes and behaviors;[45] these are staples of contemporary audience research. He conducted numerous research studies during his 18 years on the Ohio State faculty, providing WOSU

with a relative wealth of audience data obtained through the methodologies utilized by commercial broadcasters.

For example, the years 1948 and 1949 were a prolific research period for Summers. He conducted a 1948 study of radio listening in the Columbus area utilizing the coincidental telephone survey then standard in commercial radio research.[46] Data were reported in terms of audience ratings and shares, again in the commercial style, whereas previous audience estimates by educational stations had been made in terms of total (cumulative) audiences. Summers concluded that WOSU's weekday audience was "rather small," with an average rating of 0.5; the Sunday rating was 1.6.[47] In 1949 Summers conducted four studies in concert with Department of Speech graduate students. They measured the listening behavior of housewives; the extent of radio use in homes where television was also available; radio program selection by children; and the effect of television diffusion upon radio listening.[48]

In March of 1949 WOSU reported in its program guide that changes had been made in the station's program schedule as a result of audience research findings.[49] According to the report, research found that most listeners preferred longer periods of similar types of programming, as opposed to frequent changes in program type, and WOSU altered its schedule to create longer blocks of uniform programming. This proved prescient: public radio consultants in the 1970s and 1980s called on stations to adopt consistent formats instead of eclectic schedules. These recommendations were grounded in the theory that radio listeners used the medium as a service, from which they wanted consistent programming, as opposed to television viewers who often tuned in for specific shows.

The use of audience research as a programming tool became a subject of debate at WOSU in the early 1950s, just as would occur throughout the public

radio system three decades later. Minutes of a 1951 meeting are illustrative. The station manager presented results of a survey conducted by Summers concerning the relative preference of classical and popular music. Following the presentation the minutes noted that discussion involved the question: "Should we determine the amount and kind of music programs according to the demand as seen in our correspondence, telephone calls, and our own surveys?"[50] This again reflected the chronic tension within public broadcasting: Who should determine the nature of programming -- producers with their creative background and talents, or audiences who are the program's ultimate consumers?

WOSU's introspection about the relationship with its audience continued through the spring of 1951. A music committee was formed to consider whether "popular" music should be aired as "bait" to attract new listeners and as "relief" from lectures and other serious programs.[51] Another committee was charged with developing suggestions for faculty members for improving their broadcasting techniques.[52] Unfortunately, no archival records were available relating to the further deliberations of these committees. Though these committees were not involved directly with audience research, their existence demonstrated a sensitivity to audience issues during the 1950s that parallels public radio's debates of the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, contemporary public broadcasters questioned to what extent "more accessible" (read *broader appeal*) programs should be presented to attract new listeners to the overall public radio service? [53] This further underscores a theme of this paper: the long-standing but unresolved nature of the debate over accountability to audience demand in public broadcasting.

WHA became involved with ratings data in 1952 through a bit of serendipity. A.C. Nielsen, founder of the ratings firm, was a University of Wisconsin graduate and donated to his alma mater audience data on WHA from

the Madison-area ratings book.[54] The book concluded that listeners in about 62,000 Southern Wisconsin homes "used" WHA in a given month. In addition, the University's College of Agriculture conducted several surveys of farm families to measure radio listening, particularly to the morning farm broadcasts; one survey involved a mass postcard mailing, another asked households to keep diaries.[55] Along with the Nielsen data, this provided WHA officials with access to more sophisticated audience measures than "School of the Air" enrollments and mail response.

Further, the station formed a special research committee in 1952 to stimulate additional research, concerning both audiences and educational efficacy.[56] However, WHA-TV began broadcasting in 1954 and the University's emphasis upon television research at the expense of radio became apparent. Of the eight research projects completed or underway by 1956 all dealt with educational television.[57] At Ohio State, Summers' research generally included radio as well as television audiences, but the amount of research available to WOSU declined after he left the faculty in 1964. Interestingly, one of his doctoral students, Lawrence Lichty, went on to help establish NPR's audience research program in the 1970s.[58]

Audience Research Catches On

It should be noted that WOSU and WHA were not alone among educational broadcasters interested in researching their listeners. A number of other initiatives are illustrative. Beginning in the late 1920s WOI, the Iowa State College station, announced on air that it would offer free materials -- such as program guides, reading lists, recipes, and agricultural instructions -- to listeners who wrote in. This provided station managers with a mailing list and some information, albeit unscientific, about the demographic and geographic composition of the audience for certain programs;[59] the technique became

widespread among educational broadcasters. In 1932 KSAC, the Kansas State College station, studied farmers' use of radio and found that "many" farmers were listening to the station while doing chores.[60] The following year, the Oregon State College station, KOAC, sent postcard questionnaires to 338 people on a mailing list as listeners to farm programs. The listeners were asked what times they preferred to hear the station's evening farm report. KOAC reported that it changed the program's airtime based upon the survey results.[61]

New York City's municipally licensed radio station, WNYC, became active in the field of audience research after Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia appointed a committee of commercial broadcasters to recommend what to do with the moribund non-commercial station in 1934.[62] Among other findings the committee reported that WNYC had "no way of knowing how many listeners were depending upon it for service. In a city such as New York, with many stations all competing for the attention of the listeners, it is the part of program wisdom to know what following a station has."[63] Accordingly station officials launched a series of research initiatives. They announced in 1936 that they would undertake "a scientific analysis" of letters received in an attempt at solving "the problem of adapting WNYC programs to requirements of listeners' psychology."[64] The research was modelled after a similar project at NBC, in which the "quality" of the mail response was analyzed, rather than the quantity.[65] No further mention of WNYC's study was found in the station's archives. In 1939 they distributed a questionaire to a unspecified number of listeners asking about: listeners' favoriate WNYC programs; favorite musical compositions; other frequently listened-to New York stations; and demographic data, such as age, sex and educational level.[66] Again, no further mention of the survey nor its application was extant in the archives, but the concern with other stations listened to by WNYC's audience was forward looking. Public radio

stations in the 1990s are highly interested in researching "crossover" listening -- the use of commercial radio stations by public radio listeners.[67]

By the 1950s interest in audience research was slowly spreading throughout educational broadcasting, though some station managers warned against the dangers of becoming "addicted" to ratings data and losing sight of their public service missions. NAEB President Harry Skornia cautioned that "great care must be taken in the application of findings, if we are to avoid the shortcomings found in the commercial media application of ratings."[68] Nonetheless, NAEB's Research Committee considered hiring an audience research consultant as early as 1953;[69] expressed dismay over the lack of funds for audience research in 1954; [70] and considered purchasing Nielsen ratings data in 1955.[71] "The time has come for a more definite program of research and on a larger basis," the Research Committee noted in 1955.[72] As a former WHA station manager said: "It's not that the interest wasn't there, the money wasn't."[73] In 1957 NAEB held a research seminar at Ohio State.

In addition, NAEB spread the word about audience research by publishing articles with educational broadcasting research findings in the association's journals. Examples from the late 1950s included reports on a study of the percentage of "opinion leaders" in the audience of a Seattle educational radio station; and a survey of "personality traits" of Iowa City educational radio listeners.[74] Further, NAEB journals through the 1970s contained calls from academics and station managers for increased use of audience research, along with suggestions for new research methods.[75]

Discussion

At the first IER, in 1930, W.W. Charters told conferees that research was important for educational broadcasters because "some time or other the broadcaster will have to prove definitely to the teacher and the superintendent

and ultimately to the taxpayer that the student has received something better by the radio than he could have had through the ordinary processes of the classroom."[76] His words have resonated through the decades. The need to justify continued tax-based support motivated many educational broadcasters to conduct audience research -- or at least to attend to the findings of other stations -- long after pedagogical programming was de-emphasized. It is interesting to note that WOSU, which received relatively lower levels of funding from its licensee through the years than did the University of Wisconsin station,[77] conducted more research and paid more attention to academic studies than did WHA. It is understandable that the station with unstable institutional funding will be more responsive to audience interests, so that it may demonstrate to its funder that it is indeed providing a service valued by listeners.

Using research to justify institutional support remained important after passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. CPB began its audience research program to generate statistics showing Congress that people were indeed watching and listening to public broadcasting. Tom Church, a CPB research official from 1976 to 1981 who came to public broadcasting from the Arbitron research firm, stressed the value of audience research as a tool for audience building. Church sponsored a series of influential workshops for public radio managers on the use and application of research; "Think Audience" was the theme.[78] The use of audience research in public radio was becoming commonplace.

As the level of taxpayer support of public broadcasting dropped for many stations in the 1980s,[79] audience building became increasingly important for purposes of attracting station subscribers and underwriters. WHA's director of radio described the "new concept" of public radio as "you put out good stuff that the people *we want will want*."[80] In this environment research was instrumental

in determining both who are the people most likely to support public stations and what is the programming that potential subscribers want to hear.[81] In addition, the function of audience research in public broadcasting was shifting from *description* of past performance to *prediction* of future performance given a range of programming options.[82]

Changing motivations and methodologies notwithstanding, this study demonstrates that audience research has been an interest of public broadcasters to some degree for nearly as long as the industry has operated. Even before public broadcasters became heavily dependent upon listeners and viewers for financial support, they paid attention to audience interests and behavior, though sometimes amid concern about "commercialism." The public broadcasting industry's current engagement with audience research thus represents the logical progression of the work of pioneering stations such as WOSU and WHA and academic researchers such as W.W. Charters, I. Keith Tyler and Harrison B. Summers. And the issues raised by such research reflect the still unresolved mission-versus-market debate in public broadcasting.

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[1]David Giovannoni, *Radio Intelligence, 1988-1990* (Washington, D.C.: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1991), p. 19.
[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.
[3]See, for example, Marc Fisher, "The Soul of a News Machine," *Washington Post Magazine* (October 22, 1989), pp. 16-23, 37-42; Larry Josephson, "We're drunk on numbers, boring to our listeners," *Current* (April 27, 1992), p. 31; Helen Katz, "The Future of Public Broadcasting in the US," *Media, Culture and Society* 11:195-205 (1989); Martin Lee and Martin Solomon, *Unreliable Sources* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1990); Willard D. Rowland and Michael Tracey, "Worldwide Challenges to Public Service Broadcasting," *Journal of Communication* 40: 8-27 (1990).
[4]For discussion of the distinguishing values of public broadcasting, see Jay G. Blumler, "Public Service Broadcasting before the Commercial Deluge," in Blumler, *Television and the Public Interest: Vulnerable Values in West European Broadcasting* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), pp. 7-21.
[5]It should be noted that *educational radio* was the operative term for non-commercial stations prior to passage of the 1967 Act, after which they came to be generally known as *public* radio.
[6]John C.W. Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1924), and *Into The Wind* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949).

[7]The BBC did, however, begin to conduct audience research in the mid-1930s in response to the competition provided by commercial stations. See Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Volume III -- The War of Words* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[8]There are more than 1,500 U.S. radio stations licensed by the Federal Communications Commission as non-commercial, of which about 740 provide a non-religious, public-service-oriented schedule. These are the stations generally referred to as "public radio." This categorization is drawn from David Giovannoni, Thomas J. Thomas, and Theresa R. Clifford, *Public Radio Programming Strategies* (Washington, D.C.: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1992).

[9]U.S. Congress, Public Law 90-129.

[10]For more on the 1967 Act and the history of public broadcasting in general, see John Witherspoon and Rosalie Kovitz, *The History of Public Broadcasting* (Washington, D.C.: Current Publishing, 1987).

[11]WOSU-TV went on the air in 1956, WHA-TV in 1954.

[12]This claim is disputed by several other stations. See Joseph E. Baudino and John M. Kittross, "Broadcasting's Oldest Stations: An Examination of Four Claimants," *Journal of Broadcasting* 21:61-84 (1977). They conclude that KDKA, Pittsburgh, deserves the title of oldest U.S. station.

[13]See Robert J. Blakely, *To Serve the Public Interest: Educational Broadcasting in the United States* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1979); Ralph W. Johnson, "The Wisconsin School of the Air," *Wisconsin Academy Review* (June 1989), pp. 33-39; *The First 50 Years of University of Wisconsin Broadcasting* (Madison, WI: WHA Radio, 1969).

[14]The Graduate School of the Ohio State University supported this study through a Graduate Student Alumni Research Award to the author.

[15]For historical treatments of audience research, see Hugh Malcolm Beville, *Audience Ratings: Radio, Television, Cable* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1988), and Karen S. Buzzard, *Chains of Gold: Marketing the Ratings and Rating the Markets* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990).

[16]See Erik Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel: A History of Broadcasting in the United States to 1933* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

[17]Beville, p. 4.

[18]For example, many motion picture theatre operators found they had to pipe the 7 p.m. "Amos 'n' Andy" broadcast into their movie houses in order to get patrons to attend the first show of the evening. Beville, p. 3.

[19]See Erik Larson, "Watching Americans Watch TV," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1992), pp. 66-80.

[20]See James G. Webster and Lawrence W. Lichty, *Ratings Analysis: Theory and Practice* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1991).

[21]The station operated under the call letters WEAO until 1933, when WOSU was assigned.

[22]"WHA-9XM Typical Range," map in Harold A. Engel Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter SHSW).

[23]Robert C. Higgy, *Reminiscences*, (April 12, 1962), Typed manuscript in WOSU File, Ohio State University Archives, Columbus (hereafter OSU).

[24]William H. Lighty, October 24, 1921, letter to Earle M. Terry, Lighty Papers, SHSW.

[25]S.E. Frost, *Education's Own Stations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 279.

[26]*WEAO Program Bulletin* (April 1927), OSU, p. 2.

[27]*WEAO Program Bulletin* (January 1930), OSU, p. 6.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 6.

[29]Minutes of "State Coverage and ProgramEvaluation" meeting (November 30, 1932), Engel Papers, SHSW.

[30]Minutes of Radio Research Committee meeting (August 17, 1933), Engel Papers, SHSW.

[31]"Map Showing Distribution of Amount of Mail Received in Response to Programs" (1935), Engel Papers, SHSW.

[32]"Volume of Mail Inquiries" (May 1936), Engel Papers, SHSW.

[33]"Wisconsin School of the Air Survey: Second Semester 1934-35" (1935), Questionnaire in Engel Papers, SHSW.

[34]"Statistics on Radio in Wisconsin 1933-34" (1934), Engel Papers, SHSW. Assistant Program Director Harold Engel, however, later questioned the validity of the survey after noting that the survey found nearly one-third of Dane County residents said they could not receive the station's 1,000-watt signal. Engel, January 7, 1937, letter to Harold B. McCarty, Engel Papers, SHSW.
[35]I. Keith Tyler, *Reminiscences* (January 21, 1987), transcript of oral history interview conducted by Thomas A. McCain, OSU.
[36]Frank Stanton, *A Critique of Present Methods and a New Plan for Studying Radio Listening Behavior*, Doctoral Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1935.
[37]Tyler, p. 4.
[38]H.F. Lumley, "Trends in Research," in Institute for Education by Radio, *Education on the Air* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1934), p. 286.
[39]Robert C. Higgy, April 24, 1931, letter to George W. Rightmire, OSU.
[40]V.R. Sill and C.E. Lively, *How Many Farm Night Listeners?* (February 25, 1932), typed manuscript in WEAO files, OSU.
[41]*Ibid.*, p. 1.
[42]For discussion of the impact of World War II on educational radio programming, see Alan G. Stavitsky, *From Pedagogic to Public: The Development of U.S. Public Radio's Audience-Centered Strategies -- WOSU, WHA, and WNYC, 1930-1987*, Doctoral Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1990.
[43]University Radio Committee, *WHA Annual Report* (1946), Engel Papers, SHSW.
[44]Tyler, p. 7.
[45]Harrison B. Summers, "University contributions to audience research," in Institute for Education by Radio, *Education on the Air* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1950), pp. 407-412.
[46]Summers, *Coincidental Telephone Survey of Radio Listening* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Office of Radio Education, 1949), OSU.
[47]*Ibid.*, p. 2.
[48]Summers, "University Contributions," pp. 409-412; "Evening listening to radio and television in a city in which half of all homes have television sets" (1950), Typed manuscript, OSU.
[49]*WOSU Program Bulletin* (March 1949), OSU, p. 2. The report did not specify which research projects had been influential.
[50]Minutes of "WOSU General Staff Meeting" (March 29, 1951), OSU.
[51]Minutes of "WOSU General Staff Meeting" (April 12, 1951), OSU.
[52]Minutes of "WOSU General Staff Meeting" (May 17, 1951), OSU.
[53]As an exemplar, public broadcasters placed frequent promotional announcements for their news and public affairs programs during broadcasts of Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion," in an attempt to keep listeners who discovered public radio only through Keillor's popular program.
[54]University Radio-Television Committee, *Annual Report* (1954), Engel Papers, SHSW, pp. 14-15.
[55]University Radio Committee, *Annual Report* (1953), Engel Papers, SHSW, p. 5.
[56]University Radio Committee, *Annual Report* (1953), Engel Papers, SHSW, p. 13.
[57]University Radio-Television Committee, *Annual Report* (1956), Engel Papers, SHSW, p. 6.
[58]Lawrence Lichty, personal interview, February 9, 1993.
[59]John M. Russell, "Problems in a Radio Survey," in Institute for Education by Radio, *Education on the Air* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1930), pp. 290-297. Iowa State College is today known as Iowa State University.
[60]H. Umberger, "Influence of Radio Instruction upon Farm Practices," in Institute for Education by Radio, *Education on the Air* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1932), pp. 274-290. Kansas State College is today known as Kansas State University.
[61]W.L. Kadderlly, "Radio Station KOAC," in Institute for Education by Radio, *Education on the Air* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1933), pp. 264-276. Oregon State College is today known as Oregon State University.
[62]*Report of the Mayor's Committee to Study the Present Status and Future Possibilities of Broadcasting Station WNYC* (October 25, 1934), typed manuscript in WNYC files, Municipal Reference Library, City of New York (hereafter MRL).

[63]*Ibid.*, p. 3.
[64]"Plan Study of WNYC's Fan Mail," (December 4, 1936), news release in WNYC files, MRL,
[65]National Broadcasting Company, *NBC Interprets Public Service in Radio Broadcasting* (1939), Brochure, WPA Historical Records Survey (Box 3750), Municipal Archives, City of New York.
[66]"WNYC Study of Radio and Music," (November 1939), survey questionnaire in WNYC file (MRL).
[67]Giovannoni, *Radio Intelligence*, pp. 83-87.
[68]Harry J. Skornia, "What We Know From New Media Research," *NAEB Journal* 25: 26-37 (1966), p. 37.
[69]*Report of the NAEB Research Committee* (1953), Typed manuscript, NAEB Papers, SHSW.
[70]*Report of the NAEB Research Committee* (1954), Typed manuscript, NAEB Papers, SHSW.
[71]*Report of the NAEB Research Committee* (February 1955), Typed manuscript, NAEB Papers, SHSW.
[72]*Report of the NAEB Research Committee* (October 1955), Typed manuscript, NAEB Papers, SHSW.
[73]Ralph Johnson, personal interview, June 30, 1989.
[74]Ken Kager, "Educational Radio's Influence," *NAEB Journal* 18:22-23, 39-42 (1959); Bruce Elving, "Who Listens?" *NAEB Journal* 18:10-12 (1959).
[75]See, for example, Samuel L. Becker, "New Methods for Measuring Broadcasting Effectiveness," *NAEB Journal* 21:28-34 (1962).
[76]W.W. Charters, "Research in Radio Education," In Institute for Education by Radio, *Education on the Air* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1930), 274.
[77]Stavitsky, *From Pedagogic to Public*, p. 167.
[78]Tom Church, personal interview, March 1, 1993.
[79]Corporation for Public Broadcasting, *Public Broadcasting and You: Facts and Figures about Public Broadcasting in America* (Washington, DC: CPB, 1992), pp. 7-10.
[80]Mitchell interview, April 10, 1990.
[81]Significant studies include David Giovannoni, L.K. Liebold, Thomas J. Thomas and Theresa R. Clifford, *Audience '88: A Comprehensive Analysis of Public Radio Listeners* (Washington, DC: CPB, 1988), and David Giovannoni, *Public Radio Listeners: Supporters and Non-Supporters* (Washington, DC: CPB, 1985). The latter study was referred to as "Cheap 90," for its emphasis upon the 90 percent of public radio listeners who *do not* contribute to public radio stations.
[82]Gionvannoni, *Radio Intelligence*, pp. 19-27.